

Henry Morgan

S P E E C H

DELIVERED AT THE

Dinner of the St. Patrick's Society,

TORONTO,

On the 17th of March, 1860,

IN RESPONSE TO THE SENTIMENT OF

"THE IRISH RACE AT HOME AND ABROAD,"

BY WILLIAM HALLEY.

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PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF A NUMBER OF FRIENDS.  
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MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN :—

I rise to give a willing, but I fear a feeble and unequal response to the sentiment just announced in order from the chair. Several national and patriotic toasts have been already proposed, and ably responded to, and, no doubt, others will follow; but I cannot think any of them so much calculated to strike home to the seat of our national affections, our patriotism, and our pride, as this.

Love of country, love of the scenes of childhood, love of the soil from which we spring, is strong and enduring; but love of kind, love of blood and brotherhood, is, if possible, more potent and imperishable. This love at once invokes history and tradition, penetrates the misty realms of the past, chasing back enquiry to aboriginal conditions, migrating fortunes and primitive alliances. It also follows up and watches through the culminating and spreading epochs of a

people, marks their varying movements, and anticipates their destiny. Of no race, perhaps, are these remarks more true than of our own.

The nervous Greek, the plastic Italian, the philosophic German, the vivacious Frenchman, and the matter-of-fact Englishman, may not greatly cherish this pride of race, this ancestral affection, this blood relationship; but the Irishman, mercurial though be his nature, entertains it as the noblest attribute of his national character.

The Athenian of to-day, it is said, knows little of, and perhaps cares less for, the Solons and the Socrates, of the great old classic era of his country; but what modern Irishman, be his lot cast in Connaught or Canada, California or the African Cape, is not willing to lay down his life for the preservation of the memory of Milesius, Ossian, St. Patrick, or Brian Boroihme? It matters not to him whether the religion of the hero or benefactor of his race be Catholic, Protestant, or Pagan: his deep rooted love, veneration, and sense of gratitude, equally exhibit the same ardour and passion.

Many and memorable are the acts and actors forever embalmed in the national memory by this grand and glorious sentiment of the Celtic soul! I shall not now, however, dwell on the inspiring theme—this ever-active feeling of a people who have now no distinct, national, legislative existence—this people of ours which cuts no independent figure of its own in the affairs of the world; and which achieves no glory but for the benefit of others; yet achieves it everywhere, either in individualities, or in groups; and sometimes, too, in very formidable masses.

For those individualities, groups and masses, I stand up here to-night, surrounded by you, my fellow-countrymen of every creed, conviction, and perhaps, extreme, and ask what other race of men has spread abroad and excelled them in doing the world's work, whether of the head or hand—what other race has supplied the Herculeases of labor, and the "pine-benders" of civilization more than they? I think I can easily sustain the answer, should it be necessary, when I say, none! This may sound egotistical to some; but so much is continually said to our disparagement, so much injustice is done us, and we are so frequently robbed of our national rights, especially in the matter of talent, that on St. Patrick's Day at least, we should

lift our banner high up in the face of nations and exhibit our strength (of course I mean morally), show our achievements, and claim our conquests.

I do not think I can be wrong in saying we are the most prolific, spreading, sensitive, hard-working and unselfish people in the world. Some say we are the most improvident, factious, non-progressive and intemperate. It would be a rather tedious undertaking on such an occasion elaborately to produce the proof and disproof of all these assertions; but a few facts may interest without tiring. With regard to our distribution and numbers, I think I may well exclaim with the poet—

“ No pent up Utica contracts our powers,
For the whole boundless Universe is ours ; ”

because the Irishman is almost everywhere to be found where man can inhabit, and so much suits himself to circumstances, that an enthusiastic orator, at a certain St. Patrick's Day celebration, allowed himself to be carried so far as to declare, that “ even among the burning wilds of Africa, where the face of a *white man* never is seen, *Irishmen* are to be found ” ! The following humorous extract illustrating this subject, I found several years ago in a United States' paper :—“ In the East and West Indies the Irish are numerous. In Spain and Portugal, Irish merchants, their families and dependants, have been long resident. Paddy has squatted down in Egypt, built him *thatched* cabins around the catacombs—is at home with the Turks !—and is as much in favor of seraglios as the Sultan, and as firm a believer in that portion of the Koran which sanctions a multiplicity of wives ! Then, sorely against their will, have the ‘ boys from the shamrock shore ’ been made to procreate on the Malthusian principle, and add largely to the population of New South Wales and Botany Bay ! Good christians, as they are, the Irish have pilgrimaged in respectable numbers to Jerusalem, and discovered that there was better ‘ ating and drinking ’ there than the *Sassenachs* allowed them to have in ‘ the isle of their deepest devotion.’ They have, many of them, given young Jews to Jerusalem ! From this fact of location, originated, no doubt, the phrase often heard in the third municipality, viz.—‘ Creoles of Jerusalem.’ The Irish are the Ish-

maelites of the earth—wanderers everywhere—discovered 'quite at home' under the burning sun of the tropics—happy in the frozen regions of the globe, if, in the absence of the ladies, they have 'a pipe, a friend, and a glass.' Where is it the 'exiles' have not penetrated? Where are they not discovered?"

The better to form an idea of the locations and numbers of the Irish race to-day, I have made the following estimate from the best sources of which I have been able to avail myself:—

Irish in Ireland.....	6,500,000
Irish in England, Scotland and Wales...	3,000,000
Their descendants.....	1,000,000
	4,000,000
Irish and their descendants in France and Belgium	500,000
Italy, Spain and Portugal.....	200,000
Austria and the rest of Europe.....	200,000
Asia and Africa.....	200,000
Irish in the United States.....	3,500,000
Their descendants.....	7,000,000
	10,500,000
Irish in British America.....	1,000,000
Their descendants.....	1,000,000
	2,000,000
Irish in Mexico, South and Central America, &c., and their descendants.....	200,000
Irish in Australia, with their descendants.....	500,000
On the seas and non-enumerated islands.....	200,000
Exhibiting a grand total of.....	25,000,000

souls in the human census of the world! I give these figures, of course, simply for what they are worth, as an attempt to prove their plausibility here would be unpardonable on my part. One thing I may be allowed especially to mention is, that nothing more thoroughly proves the fallacy of the very current idea that the colonies of England, especially those of North America, and also the United States, are, in their people, for the greater part, of the Anglo-Saxon race. In order to be brief on this point, I will quote from the works of John

Lambert, an Englishman, with regard to Canada, the following extract, taken from a chapter on the census of 1808 :—" It is a remarkable circumstance," says the writer, " that among all the British residents in the two colonies, not two hundred Englishmen, perhaps, can be found." That since the period mentioned, the principal emigration has been from Ireland needs no demonstration. With regard to the United States, the same remark holds good, although the German immigration has been very great ; but the following figures, taken from "*Holmes' Annals of America*," and showing the arrivals of emigrants at the port of Philadelphia alone, so far back as the year 1729, go far to prove that the Irish element forms the largest share in the basis of the present population of the neighbouring Republic—English and Welsh, 267 ; Scotch, 43 ; Germans, 343 ; and Irish, 5,655 ; or a proportion of ten Irish emigrants to one from all other nations in Europe !* Mr. Lambert, from whose work I have quoted regarding Canada, states that in 1801, the year of the union, 30,000 emigrants arrived from Ireland in the United States. Facts like these enabled Mr. Robinson of New York, to make an estimate of the descendants of Irish parents in the United States, to which the figures I have given are an approximation. An attempt to prove others of my assertions would be, I fear, too tedious, and I shall, therefore, proceed to refute the charge of improvidence that is frequently urged against us.

Is it not a well-known fact that the bulk of investments of Savings Banks, both in the United States and British Provinces, consists of the savings of Irish laborers and servants ? Mr. Catermole, who published a small work on Canada in England, many years ago, stated, on the authority of the *Quebec Star*, that all the money deposited in the Savings Bank in that city, in 1831, estimated at £10,000, consisted of the savings of Irish laborers and servants, many of whom arrived penniless in the Province. The most astonishing proof of providence in our people, coupled with family affection, is that recently furnished by Dr. Cahill, in one of his letters from New York, wherein he produces a statement of the value of drafts issued in one office alone in New York each month, from the 1st Jan-

* See McGee's History of the Irish Settlers in America.

uary, 1859, to the 7th December, in the same year, and which in the aggregate amounted to £45,142. It must be borne in mind that this statement included only the value of drafts issued by one of six similar offices, showing that if this one office may be taken as an average of the whole, the amount of money remitted by the Irish poor of New York to their friends in Ireland during the year 1859, must be £270,852! No argument could more strongly prove the extraordinary love of kindred that existed in the Irish heart than this most astonishing fact. Carthage, it is said, supported in her old age her mother, Tyre. If the Irish are of Carthaginian origin, as it is maintained by our best historians, the lesson has not been lost upon them, for here in America do they labor and save for the maintainance of their poor relations at home in the old mother land.

A great many facts have come to my mind which would assist me in illustrating this subject, but I know, considering the time at our disposal, the recital of them would be unpardonable. I might show what Irish genius and labor have done all over the world, and how others, in many instances, have been accredited with their accomplishments. I will forbear dwelling on the present foremost figures of our race, but will simply allude to some of the illustrious cotemporary names inscribed on the scroll of fame. At home, in the three kingdoms, we have McClintock, the navigator, who has just received the honor of knighthood; Charles Kean, the first of living tragedians, and for whom the lovers of the drama, both in England and Ireland, are now engaged in raising a becoming testimonial; Alfred Tenyson, the poet laureate; Kane, the chemist; Russell, the letter writer; DeLacy Evans, the soldier of the Crimea, one of whose ancestors, General DeLacy, conquered it long ago for the Czar; McClise, the painter; Balfe, the composer of thirty-two operas; Foley, the sculptor; Lardner, the philosopher; Cahill, the orator, (now on a visit to America); and, if I am not mistaken, Palmerston, the Premier. On the Continent we find an O'Donnel, prominent both in Austria and Spain; Count Nugent, the Nestor of the Austrian army, a native Irishman; with McMahon and Neill, in France. The last of the illustrious dead is Sir William Patrick Napier, the greatest military historian of the day. Perhaps you have all read a tribute to

his memory, copied from the *London Times* into our provincial newspapers, but none of you saw in that article any allusion to the land of his birth. No, for it is the rule with that journal not to mention the native land of any illustrious individual, should it happen to be poor Ireland; but it is mentioned readily enough should the subject of its remarks be a murderer or a thief! Yet, it was a townsman of my own that won for that journal, by means of his powerful contributions to its columns, the name of "thunderer." In Australia, the Irish have a host of illustrious representatives, the foremost of whom is Mr. O'Shaughnessy, late Premier of Victoria, and member for Melbourne; while in point of intellect and energy, Charles Gavan Duffy, late Minister of Lands and Public Works, has no equal.

With regard to the United States, I will simply remark, as a proof of the political power our race is acquiring in that country, that a few weeks since, an Irishman, and a son of an Irishman, were elected Governor and Deputy Governor of California.

Before I conclude, Mr. President, I must draw your attention to one very important fact, exhibiting an extraordinary disregard for the feelings of the Irish inhabitants of this country. The fact is, Sir, that while Ireland has contributed about two-thirds of the population of Upper Canada, our county nomenclature does not embrace a single Irish name, while about nine-tenths are English or Scotch. This circumstance may not have before struck any of the gentlemen around this board, and I beg to remark now that it is an invidious state of things that the Irish population of Upper Canada should no longer tolerate. I am not one of those who think that the Irish population should be united *en masse* for political purposes, because I do not consider such a combination would be right or just, at the same time that I deplore their factiousness towards each other. Apart from its impolicy I think any attempt at such a combination would be utterly impracticable, because there is no man in the world who values his independence so much, and maintains his own private views with more tenacity, than the Irishman. It is impossible to weld the Irish element into one mass in this way; hence the everlasting, stupid cry of Irish disunion. But when so flagrant an injustice, amounting to insult, is done us, as a people, I think a demand to repair the wrong

to which I allude must be speedily heeded. There is not even a county to perpetuate the memory of the late Colonel Talbot, the pioneer of Lake Erie ! Then, let this not continue.

Mr. President, while I say so much of our own people, far be it from me to offer any uncalled for disparagement of any other. All races and people have their virtues and vices. We have all come to this country to make our livelihood and build up a new nation. We Irish, have brought our labour and intellect ; the English have brought their capital and experience ; the Scotch their thrift and perseverance ; the Germans their industry and patience ; and other nations in like manner have contributed their quota, all of which added to the virtues of the old French stock that preceded them, let it be hoped, will eventually harmonize in producing a new nation in the north of the New World that in course of time will rear itself to a position of eminence and of glory. But let us, fellow-countrymen, take care now, that in after generations when its history comes to be written, and its heroic ages described, that the Irish element of its population will be properly represented in the pages.